

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 938

S E C R E T ROME 6528

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (PRESIDENT FORD), VT

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO VATICAN

REF: STATE 103235

1. WE BELIEVE FOLLOWING WILL BE SUBJECTS OF GREATEST INTEREST TO POPE PAUL FOR HIS TALK WITH PRESIDENT ON MAY 3:

A. MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROSPECTS, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF PRESIDENT'S DISCUSSIONS WITH SADAT. VATICAN'S ACCELERATING DIALOGUE WITH ARABS ON ME INCLUDED PAPAL AUDIENCE FOR LIBYAN PM JALLOUD ON APRIL 30. PF SPECIAL INTEREST TO POPE WOULD BE ANY CONCRETE IDEAS WE MAY HAVE DEVELOPED FOR SOLUTION OF JERUSALEM AND HOLY PLACES.

B. RECONCILIATION IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA. THE CHURCH HAS CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN VIETNAM WHERE ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF POPULATION IS CATHOLIC. FACT THE MANE CATHOLICS WERE ORIGINALLY REFUGEES FOR NORTH IS MOST WORRISOME TO VATICAN.

C. DETENTE AND CSCE. AS SIGNATORY OF NPT AND PARTICIPANT IN CSCE, THE HOLY SEE IS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN PEACEFUL RELATIONS IN EUROPE, DISARMAMENT AND LIMITATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONRY. PRESIDENT MAY WISH TO ASSURE POPE THAT SPIRIT OF DETENTE WOULD NOT LEAD US TO ACCEPT COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN WESTERN

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EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. SUCH ASSURANCES WOULD BE MOST WELCOME

TO POPE WHO WAS VERY PLEASED TO LEARN FROM SECRETARY
KISSINGER LAST JULY THAT USG WAS NOT LETTING DOWN ITS GUARD
TOWARD USSR BECAUSE OF DETENTE.

D. PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN AND
PORTUGAL ARE OF GREAT CONCERN TO POPE, WHO IS DIRECTING CHURCH'S
EFFORTS TOWARD THIS END.

2. PRESIDENT MAY WISH TO THANK POPE FOR HIS AND VATICAN'S
COOPERATION WITH LODGE MISSION AND EXPRESS HIS AWARENESS OF THE
VALUE OF THIS RELATIONSHIP TO OUR MUTUAL SEARCH FOR PEACE AND
THE ALLEVIATION OF HUMAN SUFFERING.

3. AT CLOSE OF AUDIENCE, POPE CAN BE EXPECTED TO PRESENT A GIFT
TO PRESIDENT AND TO READ A SHORT STATEMENT OF WELCOME. NO TEXT
CAN BE OBTAINED BEFOREHAND, HOWEVER. THE PRESIDENT SHOULD BE
PREPARED TO MAKE SOME BRIEF, IMPROPTU REMARKS OF THANKS.VOLPE

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